:: Vol. 4, No. 3 ::
:: March, 1928 ::

Borgo S. Spirito, 5
Rome (113), Italy

ACIES ORDINATA



THE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REVIEW
ISSUED BY THE

:: :: CENTRAL SECRETARIATE OF SODALITIES OF OUR LADY :: ::

For circulation among Ours only

"THE VIRGIN MARY WITH HER LOVING SON, BLESS US EACH AND EVERY ONE!"

An Exhortation to Sodalists.

By Father Aloysius Niederegger, (Austrian Province).

It is an old custom among soldiers and among friends to choose a watchword full of meaning, easy to remember and easy to repeat. Thus *the Sodality of Our Lady* has chosen the verse just quoted from the Breviary, and employs it as its watchword.

Now consider **the object** in the choice of a watchword. Soldiers and friends use it

1) *to distinguish friend from foe;*
2) *as a sign of mutual recognition;*
3) *as an external bond of union;*
4) *as a means of developing enthusiasm.*

So you too, my dear Sodalists, have your watchword, esteem it, make use of it constantly when alone to drive the devil away and with your fellow-Sodalists to preserve and develop fraternally the spirit of the Sodality.

Consider 2dly **the petition** made and **the expressions** used in this watchword!

It is a question of the blessing of the Blessed Virgin and of God, all good and all great. Consider the value we ought to set on such a blessing!

See how much the Patriarchs of the Old Testament thought of their fathers' blessing! They knew that "*it establisheth the houses of the children,*" (Eccli. 3, 11) and was it but an earthly blessing. How much greater then should our esteem be for a blessing straight from heaven, all heavenly.

Moreover, we need this blessing. What else do we so earnestly beg and pray for in this blessing but divine grace, habitual and actual, without which we can gain no merit in God's sight, without which we cannot begin, carry through or perfect any single good work? "*Sons of God we are called and we are*" (I. Io. III, 1); in labor and in struggle, from earth we stretch out to our home in heaven. We have need of the help of God ever present and never failing. Nothing can we do nor ever shall unless

"The Virgin Mary with her loving Son
Bless us each and every one!"

"Bless us" is our prayer. **With singular appropriateness** do we beg this blessing. We are Sodalists and therefore bound not only by duties common to all but by those of a higher nature as well. "*Longing to serve*" the Blessed Virgin, we firmily resolved in our consecration to be specially pleasing to Her and Her Son, to progress in the way of Christian perfection, and not to offend God in any way. We also resolved to make it our utmost endeavor to get all others to become her faithful servants. How shall we ever realize all this without special and generous outpourings of divine grace? This, therefore, is the grace we demand and drawn down upon ourselves from Heaven as often as we repeat this aspiration:

"The Virgin Mary.... bless us!"

Again, it is **with special confidence** that we make this prayer. We are clients of the Blessed Virgin, her humble servants, and devoted children who work and fight under her standard. Her help and protection we have and firmily hold as a possession peculiarly our own.

Again, we are Sodalists bound to each other by holy ties for the realizing of one common object. Hence, when we say "*Bless* **Us**" we must pray for each other,

for all, and for each and every individual. In this manner, ever mindful of true fraternal charity, we shall not fail to aid each other by word and example.

Lastly, we must reverently observe **the solemnity** of the words we use and the profession we make when we say "*with her Blessed Son*", and "*Mary*".

We profess our faith in Mary's perpetual virginity and in her divine Maternity; we profess too our hope. Then, "*Her Blessed Son,*" — what does this speak of but a Son, her own Child, full of mercy, infinite in mercy with Whom she is joined so intimately as to become and to be called upon as "*Mother of Mercy*" "*Mother of Divine Grace*", "*Mediatrix of all Graces*" and hence in trials of life and straits of death, "*Our Hope*". Our devotion, finally, is excited and enkindled and our love made to grow as often as we utter the sweet and sacred name of Mary. Every sound of it is as finest myrrh, as cinnamon and aromatic balsam, with odor so sweet; precious ointment poured out, healing our wounds, making our heart beat fast with love.

Let us pray then and ever with piety, with confidence and with love, say these words:

"The Virgin Mary with her loving Son
Bless us each and every one".

WITH THE SODALITY SCHOOLS.

The Sodality Schools still occupy Father Lord. Only one change has been made; instead of "delegates" being sent, all students are left free to attend the meeting; entire schools often come, Moreover the numbers grow daily, and the students prove their appreciation by attending four classes on Saturday and Sunday, thus completely sacrificing the week's holidays.

At **Creighton University** (Ours), **Omaha, Nebraska,** 15 institutions of learning were represented by 550 students and 75 priests and sisters. *A Students' Spiritual Union* was formed with the Creighton University Sodality as president. The Omaha secular newspapers featured the schools.

The Catholic schools and colleges of **Denver, Colorado,** sent 700 students and 103 priests and sisters. Delegates were present from 17 schools, including the Newman Club of Denver University and the Colorado School of Mines. Our **St. Francis Regis College** Sodality was made head of the *Students' Spiritual Union.*

Detroit, Michigan, had been the scene last fall, of a Sodality School attended by 350 Sodalists and Sisters from Marygrove College for Catholic women and its allied high schools; but in February, Father Lord returned there for the largest Sodality Scool thus far. 884 students came, and the number of priests and sisters reached 174. The resulting Sodality Union is headed by the Senior Sodality of **Detroit University** with *Father George Keith, S. J.*, as moderator.

Beginning in March, Father Lord held Sodality Schools in the California province at Seattle, San Francisco, Spokane and Los Angeles.

Creighton University Faculty Sodality.

One of the most promising and consoling results of the Sodality School movement was the formation of a Sodality for the secular professors of Creighton University. The idea was proposed by three of them who had attended the Sodality School and was gladly assented to by all the professors in the Law and Commerce Schools. Recruits were confidently expected from other branches of the faculty. The new Sodality, composed of 30 full-time professors, began with a program of a *monthly meeting* with *recitation of the Little Office* in the College chapel, followed by a *symposium* on strictly Catholic subjects.

Securing the good spirit for the Parishes.

The Parish Sodalities ought to benefit greatly by these Sodality Schools, and we feel sure they will. Every school affected by this movement will graduate a number of boys and girls next June who have become enthusiastic for the service of Our Blessed Lady in the Sodality.

The transfer of these fervent young Sodalists to their new environment is a matter of real importance for the **Directors** of the School and the Parish Sodalities, for the **Schools** and the **Sodalities**, and for the **charitable organizations** already existing in the parishes. Hence it is very advisable that each of the parties interested carefully consider how the transfer is to be made without loss of enthusiasm, the wounding of sensibilities, etc. Certainly the process of assimilation will demand considerable thought and foresight, prayer and sacrifice, humility and charity.

The younger folk are in *danger of being chilled* by their elders when these are unaccustomed to demonstrative activity. Or the young may give way to unkind criticism and be *too impatient* to introduce their schemes. Of this they need to be warned by their present Directors, while Directors of Parish Sodalities should try to prepare their people to welcome the new arrivals. **Sections** for the activities which appeal to the latter will probably be the best manner of assimilating them. If the young folks be constantly *charitable and respectful toward the veteran* Sodalists many of the latter may be encouraged to new activities. And on the other hand, these young people will be steadied and confirmed in their apostolic resolutions by seeing the *constancy and generosity of older members* who are already inured to apostolic endeavor.

The proper preparation and effectuation of this transfer is one of the greatest services that Directors can render to the Sodality of Our Lady tending as it does to increase and spread membership and efficacy. It is one of the best ways of **ensuring to over-burdened parish-priests willing lay-workers** who are animated by a supernatural, apostolic spirit.

Another good effect of the Sodality Schools and the resulting unions has been the **opening of the doors** of many Sodalities to Ours, especially to the Rev. Moderators of the new Sodality unions. They have thus been enabled to *repeat and re-enforce the lessons* of the Sodality Schools and so **preserve the true ideal of the Sodality.** Other religious and diocesan priests will be quick to appreciate the *benefits accruing to their parishes*, and thus *the bond of charity between them and us* will be strengthened.

CATHOLIC INSTRUCTION LEAGUE
SHOWS FEASIBILITY OF SODALITY PROGRAM.

The "*C. I. L. Messenger*" of Chicago, Ill., is a great source of comfort to those who wish to see the Sodality of Our Lady realize its vast program. For the *Messenger* demonstrates **the great need** *of catechetical activity* even in the most Catholic centers, and it shows, besides, men and women acting as **catechists**, *whose education and social standing is the same as that of many of our Sodalists* in the same territory. This encourages us to believe that if Directors will put before their Sodalists various **concrete instances of the need** which exists, the zeal of the Sodalists will make them anxious to prepare themselves properly and then go to work.

The account we give here, taken from the **report of the Omaha, Nebraska, C. I. L. for 1927**, cites instances which can be duplicated almost anywhere. (1)

Various members of the Omaha League made **house-to house** canvasses with the following results :

90 children needing instruction were found by one canvasser in her territory.

Another taught catechism *in her own home*, twice a week, with an average attendance of **25** children.

In one family, the youngest child has been *baptized* and the others, aged 13, 14 and 16, will soon make their First Communion. Four sons of one family, *baptized by Lutherans*, are now taking instructions. A Polish woman, *married civilly* to a Chinaman, has four children who were *attending a non-Catholic mission*. They now attend the League center, the father will be instructed and the marriage righted.

Within 32 city blocks, **60** children needing instruction were found, 3 non-Catholic mothers wish *to enter the Church :* 2 who fell away *will return ;* one of them has *seven unbaptized children*, five of whom are now being instructed.

Parish priests and others *join in teaching these persons*.

The consoling side of this apostolic work well appears from the following :

The number of pupils of the Omaha C. I. L. is less this year than last. But the reason is that **1,000** of them **passed** from the public schools **to the new parochial schools**. The zeal of the bishop and pastors and the generosity of the people undoubtedly made this change possible, but the work of the League in *ferreting out* the ought-to-be's and catechizing them, was a potent factor. *The child's desires* often decide the school he will go to, and it is much easier for parents to send him to a Catholic school, when he has begun to know and love his faith in practice. Nor should it be forgotten that these *little converts* (for such many of them really are) become *true apostles towards their ignorant or negligent parents*.

Here is **a little chapter of history**, worthy of deep and prayerful consideration.

During the last year, **the League closed one of its largest centers** (in Omaha) where 215 children were being taught. When opened in 1920, it had only 24 pupils.

Attendance was very irregular and best at holiday seasons and on special occasions.

Only 3 or 4 persons communicated then, in the church, on Sundays; today the comunicants average 100.

First Communion children, 6 years ago, were from 13 to 15 years old; today the ages range from 7 to 8.

Three Sodalities and a *Holy Name Society* were formed through the cooperation of the superintendent of the League center.

A new parochial school opened in 1926, with six sisters in charge took in 202 pupils.

So the League center having ceased to be necessary and having much to do elsewhere, folded its tents and went away.

It went away (we presume) to places like the Assumption Mexican Center where *52 children are on the list, but only 11 attend regularly ;* or to the center at Gibson, among Mexicans and other immigrants, where *the superintendent has administered 40 baptisms ;* or to the Santa Lucia center which used to meet *in the basement under a grocery store* about a mile from Fort Omaha (it seems like two miles, they say, if you are walking a muddy lane in the rain), where two teachers feel themselves amply rewarded because *the children are so anxious to learn*, where the center having proved its worth has been invited by the parish-priest to "*go up higher*", leave the grocery-store basement and use a class-room in the parochial school.

The League was instrumental in having Sisters conduct vacation schools in various centers.

The children of one center are not only taught catechism, during the year but *Bible History, Liturgy and singing*. High School students among them have been *set right about historical errors* regarding the Church, and have been taught to appreciate *literature from a Catholic standpoint*.

All this activity of the League, reminds us of Father Bangha's articles on "*The Sodalist's Introduction to the Apostolate*" ("*A. O.*" 1925,

(1) Cf. "*C. I. L. Messenger*", Oct.-Nov., 1927, p. 13.

pp. 3, *13,* 24, 36) and especially what he indicated about "**Home and District Workers**" and "**The Collection of information for the Parish Catalogue**" (p. 14). At the time it was published, some feared that such activity would not be welcomed by many priests. Yet here is the League doing such work; and **the parish-priests are contented**, nay only too glad, to have the opportunity to join in helping these unfortunate members of their flocks.

Nor need we ascribe such ignorance to the negligence of parish-priests. It is enough to recall the time and energy consumed by the priests in tending those who call upon them, the distances involved and the unstableness of modern populations.

Happily the number of college and parish Sodalities which are entering this field is growing and there is great reason to hope that Directors will encourage their Sodalists either to commence Catechism Sections in the Sodality or offer themselves to strictly catechetical organizations like the Catholic Instruction League.

On Promoting the Spirit of the Sodalities

According to the rules, the spirit which ought to reign in every Sodality and in every Sodalist, is the spirit of Our Lady, the spirit of personal perfection, the spirit of the apostle.

I. The Spirit of our Lady.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin has always been a special mark of good Catholics, distinguishing them from other Christians. Today also in the battle against modern errors concerning faith and morals, devotion to the Mother of God is especially necessary and cannot be fostered too much. Even among Catholics, unfortunately love of the Blessed Virgin is not always what it should be. Many in seeking the Son, leave the Mother aside. Devotion to Mary is for them an unknown land quite devoid of interest. Only last year, **a religious** (otherwise an exemplary priest), in the course of a talk to his brethren, affirmed, that in some places the liturgy was little esteemed, because of exaggerated honor given to the Blessed Virgin in her Sodalities.

Now if a priest, a religious and a director of the Sodality of Our Lady, can talk in that way, what may we not expect from layfolk? And yet it is precisely through the liturgy that men can learn to love the Blessed Virgin; if the "law of prayer" becomes for them the "law of belief," they will become most faithful servants of the Immaculate Virgin. But on this point Sodalists have extreme need of instruction. Clearly too they need to be taught true and solid devotion to Our Lady, which is the imitation of her virtues

If this be given them carefully and constantly, "in season and out of season" through reproof, entreaty and rebuke (2 Tim. 4, 2) the foundations of spiritual progress will be laid, and the Sodalists will begin to be possessed of

II. The Spirit of Personal Perfection.

The Director, while varying his methods and making use of occasions, must teach the Sodalists all about salvation and perfection. Nor will it be superfluous for him to dwell at times on the simple truths of the catechism treating them from different angles. Finally he must go even farther by proposing the daily practices recommended by the 6th of the Common Rules.

How then, with such an array of duties can a Director do justice to his office if he only has one meeting a month, which he gets through with in a quarter of an hour? What *prayers* can Sodalists say, what sort of an *exhortation* can they hear, what methods of apostolic endeavor can they *discuss* together and agree upon, in so short a time? Moreover, to have meetings so rarely, outside of very special cases, by no means accords with the Common Rules of the Sodality.

Here again is another necessary means to perfection which the Director cannot afford to neglect. Many Sodalists gladly come for confession to the Director or to Ours in general, thus giving us an excellent occasion for exhortation, admonition and encouragement to spiritual progress and the apostolate. No need of long sermons; a few words will suffice to help these penitents substantially. If however when they accuse themselves only of negligence and omissions in their daily practices of piety, the confessor contents himself with saying: "*Those are not sins; one is free to omit such exercises,*" he is hardly going to lead his penitents to spiritual perfection and self-denial.

Time is another thing which the Director must devote to the Sodality's affairs and to the Sodalists themselves. The latter must have proper opportunities to consult him concerning their private interests as well as those of the Sodality; but if he is never at their disposal, whether on occasions of Sodality meetings or at other times, their zeal will soon decrease; or, if it last for a time, that happy result will be due to lessons learned under former and wiser directors.

Any Director who makes little of the spiritual life and progress of his Sodalists, need not wonder if the same apathy at length appear in the Sodalists themselves. He would do well to remember that Directors must answer for the Sodalities and the Sodalists to God, the Church, and the Society.

Where however the Marian spirit of personal perfection flourishes, one finds its natural offspring in

III. The Apostolic Spirit.

Besides zeal for one's own sanctification, two things are needed if the Sodality is to give the results which the Church rightly expects of it: the first consists in the Director's watchfulness, observation, foresight and guidance; and the second consists in giving **the Sodalists** liberty and opportunity to exercise their own *initiative*, and to call upon their companions and even on the Director for help.

If the Director is not sharp to see and eager to remedy the manifold ills of mankind today; and if the Sodalists are never free to discuss such matters together; the Sodality will never be equal to the task the proper performance of which is the Sodality's true reason for existence; it will never measure up to the apostolate; never efficaciously block the lessening of Christian life, much less contribute materially to its growth; never be an elite or a chosen band really fit to fight the battles of the Lord. Directors and Sodalists fall short of the needs of the times when they think that they have fully complied with the spirit of the Sodality and the Sodalist's religion through attendance at sermons, General Communions once a month, and alms–giving at Christmas–time. Far other things besides are required: many of them were the subjects of articles by different fathers in last year's "*Acies Ordinata*" to which we refer our readers. One or two of them however, on account of their greater relative importance, must be recalled here.

1) The first are activities connected with **the Catholic press.** The various ways in which Sodalists can and should cooperate to enable that press to fulfil its exalted mission, were thoroughly outlined by Father Adalbert Bangha in the "*Acies Ordinata*" of other years (See the year **1925**, pp. 25, 33, 43, 55, 67. Cf. also **1925**, p. 61 and **1926**, p. 35).

Not a few Directors will be much enlightened and not a little surprised if they cause an investigation of the *books and periodicals issued by non–Catholics* and bought and read by Sodalists (1).

2) The **crusade against immodesty** in dances and in women's dress, which was proposed in "*A. O.*" 1927, p. 28.

Some Sodality publications set the matter before their readers in very serious fashion; and we earnestly hope that others will do the same and continue to keep the matter before their readers. Directors must be the first to insist on this point.

3) Activities regarding **young people.** How many dangers and snares await them? No one is dearer to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary than children and youth. Hence great care should be had of them and Catholic schools should be demanded and prepared for them.

4) Everything which makes for the support, **culture and progress of laborers and artisans** of both sexes. The living conditions of many of these people are bad in the extreme, and must be remedied by every just means. It is very difficult to raise people out of moral and religious misery unless they be first relieved entirely of external, physical misery, or at least substantially and constantly helped in their difficulties.

Then too one should reflect that the **atheism and materialism** now invading the laboring classes, can hardly be combated with better or apter arms than those which Divine Providence has given to the Society, namely, **the Spiritual Exercises** and the **Sodality of Our Lady**. By making constant and timely use of these agencies, we will train many laboring–people to be brave soldiers of Christ and strenuous apostles among their companions. This has already been proved by experience in some countries.

In this connection, we should like to make two observations:

1) The Spiritual Exercises to be given to laborers (and in fact to persons of all classes), should be the **genuine exercises** of our Holy Father Ignatius, and not merely a *series of sermons* or *conferences*, or an *explanation of the Scriptures*. Such exercises however good in themselves are not the Ignatian exercises of the Society, nor do they give the results ordinarily produced by genuine Ignatian retreats.

2) Workingmen's Sodalities must be **genuine Sodalities**, and not simply more or less pious *labor unions*. And let the Director *ask sacrifices* of his Sodalists; laboring–men are very prompt to sacrifice themselves and deny their own will; and they will do so in order to obtain great blessings from heaven. Among, such men a wise Director can train excellent helpers, real co–apostles. The need is great because subversive elements are already well–established in the field and working hard, while the number of laborers in the harvest is far too few.

5) Finally, **the Home and Foreign Missions** must be kept to the fore. Ingenious charity has proposed so many ways of aiding the missions that it is easy for all, even for boys and girls to cooperate.

We cannot refrain however from singling out one point in this connection: **the study** *of the missions*. All who are familiar with the methods of "*The Catholic Students' Mission Crusade*" as carried on in the United States, know that the students make earnest and detailed studies of definite portions of the mission field, and write reports on them which are afterwards discussed n meeting by other members of the unit. Observation shows that such study gives the Sodalist **a very definite idea** of the mission's needs, and **a keen appreciation** of the physical and moral misery which obtains there. Sodalists who manifest their interest in the missions along these lines are in a way of becoming *useful mission propagandists*, some even may develop *vocations* to the direct service of the Church, but in any case, *their zeal* for the cause will normally be *far greater and more enduring* than that of other less instructed persons. The missions cannot perfectly succeed in their great work without a large body of thoroughly earnest and persevering workers *behind the lines*.

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(1) A Sodalist while visiting a book-store noticed 36 copies of an immoral periodical, bought them and burned them immediately. Every forbidden book which the Sodalists find in their homes should be destroyed at once!

While praising the generosity and good intentions of this Sodalist, we would much prefer to see time and money spent in an effort to deter book-sellers from dealing in such literature. Sodalists in some places in Spain have succeeded at least in making such dealing a risky business; and the Catholic Youth Association of France at St. Etienne and Lyons cooperated with civic and Protestant associations, obtaining in many instances the disappearance from public view of objectionable books and pictures.

SCHOOL-MISTRESSES' SODALITY OF PRAGUE

This Sodality came into existence in 1892, at the end of a retreat given at Prague in the convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart by our **Father John Cibulka,** a man widely known in Bohemia and adjacent states for his truly apostolic zeal. 52 trained school-mistresses had made the retreat and inspired by the director's words, asked and obtained the formation of a Sodality for themselves. 22 teachers were admitted. A secular priest became the director and the meetings were held in our ancient college of St. Bartholomew (1).

But when the priest resigned the directorship in 1894 and was succeeded by one of Ours, the Sodality was transferred to our Church of St. Ignatius. There nevertheless it declined and by 1898 it was almost extinct. The appointment of Father Cibulka as it Director, how ever, saved its life. Prudent and excellent Director that he was, he at once introduced several activities, among them a **Literary Section** which in the course of time published many books of great value to youth and also issued a manual for Catholic school-mistresses. The Sodalists became active in the **Apostolate of the Press,** engaged in **spreading good books** among the people, and, years later, at the cost of great labor, assisted very materially in establishing the Bohemiam Sodality monthly magazine, " *Vestnik marianskych druzin.* "

A closed retreat of three days was secured for the members, to be given annually in the Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart at Prague-Smichov. It is attended with great profit every year by about 120 school-mistresses from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

According to the yearly report for 1912, the Sodalists brought many children to adore the Blessed Sacrament during Its exposition on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. (This work of zeal still continues). 100 children also asked to be enrolled in the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart.

In 1915, the Sodalists obtained a solemn celebration of the " Feast of Jesus Christ, the Children's Friend." On this occasion, after a sermon by a priest, the children recite poems and sing hymns before a suitable statue of Our Lord.

Teaching Christian Doctrine with the help of the catechism and the explanations of approved authors was carried on by some Sodalists from 1916 to 1918; but was interrupted " by the difficulties of the times."

In 1915, on Easter Monday, and also in 1916, the Sodalists complied with the wishes of Pope Benedict XV, by promoting General Communions of children for the return of peace.

On Epiphany, 1918, the Sodalists held the first " *Feast of the Children at the Crib of Bethlehem,*" at which the little ones sang the beautiful religious hymns called " *Koledy.*"

In 1920, the Sodalists began to lithograph a little magazine for children, " *Ditko marianske* " (" The Little Child of Mary ").

(1) It was in the same college that the *first students' Sodality in Bohemia* was founded in 1575 and had **Blessed Edmund Campion for its Director.**

In 1922, they held a bazaar to buy clothes, food and school necessaries for distribution to poor children at Christmas. 3,900 Kc. were raised.

To deepen still more their apostolic spirit, 17 Sodalists who had often made closed retreats of three, six and even eight days, asked in 1926 to be given the **Long Retreat**. Their request was granted and they passed the thirty days in the Ursuline convent at Kuttenberg. **The result** has been an extraordinary spirit of **self-denial** and activity in **many apostolic works,** which the Sodalists have taken up most willingly in order to gain the children to Christ.

Mention is made in the Sodality Records of 1926-7 of a another form of apostolic work, which the Sodality has already carried on for a number of years, namely, the **care of boys' and girls' Sodalities** in many **suburbs** of Greater Prague.

Some of the more important of these Sodalities which are managed by Sodalists under the general supervision of their own Director are: in **Prague-Zizkov:** Girls' Sod. (88 members, 14 candidates); Boys Sod. (14 members, 9 candidates); Girls' Sod. (7 members, 6 candidates); Boys Sod. (13 members, 3 candidates) (1).

Prague Holesovice: Girls Sod. (22 members, 2 candidates); Boys' Sod. (4 members, 3 candidates).

Prague Vinohrady: Girls' Sod. (12 members, 5 candidates).

In Advent, 1926, under the guidance of her Sodality-Director, *Father Vladimir Dreiseitel*, **the moderatrix** of the Prague-Zizkov childrens' Sodalities, **gave two eight-day missions** to her little charges. There was a meditation in the morning and another in the evening, many of the exercitants going to Holy Communion every day. Thus a group of 22 small girls and another of 20 adolescents were enabled to have an Ignatian retreat.

These little Sodalities are sometimes taken on pilgrimages and outings by their " Big Sisters. " Each of them has its library and the members relish good Catholic books.

The director of the School-mistresses' Sodality who is ultimately the Director of the children's Sodalities, constantly insists on the immense importance of **solid catechetical instruction** for the children, and on their being induced to put in practice what they learn, espespecially as regards **frequentation of the Sacraments.**

Every Christmas the children's Sodalities give **academies in honor of the Infant Jesus,** in which they sing, declaim and perform instrumental music. **Gifts** are then made them which have been paid for by money begged for the purpose by the school-mistresses.

These happy meetings have been honored by the presence of H. E. the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Marmaggi.

Impressed by their children's devotion the **parents have often begged to be admitted to the children's Sodalities,** and as a consequence separate Sodalities for the parents have sometimes been erected.

Father John Cap. Cerny.

(1) The members of the last two Sodalities no longer attend school.

INDIRECT APPROBATION OF THE SODALITY

Before the great Congress of Catholic Youth in Belgium, held at Liège in August, 1927, the **Rt. Rev. Thomas L. Heylen, Bishop of Namur**, approved many rules of this association, and **H. E. Cardinal Van Roey** later did the same.

Now in several of those rules one finds incorporated certain principles which have obtained in the Sodality of Our Lady from its earliest times, Such are for example :

« 2. *The Church wishes these associations for young people to be schools in which the finishing touches may to be put to their religious, moral and intellectual education and in which they may be prepared for a fruitful apostolate among their companions.*

« 3. *That these associations may give satisfying results, they must work constantly, intensely and methodically and direct all their activity in harmony with the proper customs and circumstances of our young people.*

« *Methodical and steady effort in teaching and instruction is what the Church expects from these associations ; intense and persevering effort is only possible where such associations are homogeneous, only admitting members of the same social standing* ».

(Cf. « *Effort* », Louvain, Aug. 1927, p. 265).

It often happens that both Sodalists and Directors, especially parish-priests, require all persons of the same relative age and sex to be gathered into a single Sodality, so that there may be **only four Sodalities** in the parish : namely, the *Young Men's, the Men's,* the *Young Ladies'* and the *Married Women's* Sodalities. In the country and in little towns, there is very often no other course possible. But the case is far different in large city parishes. There the 4th of the Common Rules may be observed with great profit:

« 4. *The Sodality of Our Lady has been established for all the faithful. But its form of organization is best kept and its ends are most efficaciously reached if separate Sodalities are established for separate classes of people differing in age, state or condition of life, so as to form Sodalities of boys, young men, mature men, students, workingmen, etc.* »

The Sodalists and Directors to whom we refer above, probably regard such rules and practices as obsolete, unsuited to modern times and ways of thinking, and yet here we have eminent bishops recommending them as a matter of prime necessity to an association founded only yesterday ! !

COPENHAGEN MEN'S SODALITY JUBILEE.

The Men's Sodality of Copenhagen, Denmark, celebrated its golden jubilee last June, a very notable event considering the intensely Protestant character of the country (1) and the religious coldness which unfortunately manifests itself there even among Catholics.

On the day itself, the members of the Sodality received Holy Communion together in our church of the Sacred Heart and in the evening **Rt. Rev. J. Brems,** Vicar Apostolic of Denmark, (an honorary member of the Sodality) addressed the Sodalists and their assembled friends. After the Te Deum and Benediction, a meeting exclusively for Sodalists was held in **St. Canute's College**, all wearing the ribbon and medal.

After a sketch of the Sodality's history and some other speeches by members, the Bishop spoke at length praising the Sodalists for the good done the Church in Denmark through their activity and example. Congratulatory letters were read from *H. E. Cardinal Van Rossum, V. R. Father General,* the *Rt. Rev. Bishops of Norway and Sweden,* and also from several *Sodalities.*

A valuable result of the celebration is the book published by the Sodality and entitled " *Mariakongregationen for Maend i. Kobenhaven, 1877-1927* „. (The Men's Sodality of Our Lady in Copenhagen).

In the first part, the *purpose, means* and *history of the Sodality in general* are explained.

The second part treats of the *rise and growth of the Copenhagen Sodality.* When the formation of such a Sodality was first proposed, some sceptic writing in a local Catholic paper scouted the idea that men could be found willing to live up to the Sodality's serious requirements. The men were found nevertheless and the Sodality has ever since been a living reality.

Sketches of deceased Directors of the Copenhagen Sodality close the volume.

A glance at **the work of this Sodality** suffices to explain the good it has done to the Church in Denmark.

Self-sanctification is fostered by diligent observance of the *rules. Meetings* take place in our church every Thursday evening; strict account is kept of *absentees.* The Sodality makes the *Spiritual Exercises* every three years. All strive to attend *funerals* of deceased Sodalists; and the Sodality later has a Mass said and the members recite the rosary in meeting and make the Way of the Cross for the departed. Similar exercises are held in November for all deceased Sodalists.

Good example is given by willing participation in acts of public worship. All wear the *ribbon and medal* at meetings, General Communions, etc. Sodalists *serve Mass* and every First Friday, the Eucharistic Section join in a *Communion of Reparation.*

The Apostolate is variously practiced, some members devoting themselves to the *pagans of Copenhagen,* others bringing *lukewarm Catholics* to the Church and the Sacraments; some bring *Protestants* to Catholic ceremonies in the Church ; still others work to prevent or validate *civil marriages.* Many *poor* persons, especially those ashamed to beg, are helped through the Sodality.

The Copenhagen Sodality was the *first in Denmark,* but since its erection in 1877, **13 others** have been begun, ten of which are directed by Ours.

H. K.

Editor's Note :

More than **500 men** joined this Sodality in the 50 years of its existence. Its prosperity is largely due to the fervor and skill of its **Directors** *who were seldom changed* ; the present incumbent, **Father Uldaric Sialm,** S. J., having had only five predecessors.

(1) Total population of Denmark and Faroe Island 3,430,000 ; Catholic 22,200.

THE HOLY FATHER AND THE MEXICAN SODALIST MARTYRS.

As is well known, when the Holy Father was presented last year with a group photograph of the four martyrs of Leon (Mexico), he wrote upon it with his own hand:

" Et palmae in manibus eorum...
" Gloriae Christi...
" Sanguis martyrum semen...
" Laudem eorum nuntiet Ecclesia."

This autograph was later sent to relatives of these Sodalists, and has since been published far and wide. In using words taken from the liturgical office of the Church, and especially the last, the Holy Father seems to imply clearly that these heroes of the Faith can some day be inscribed in the catalogue of the Blessed and the Saints, which would certainly be a great honor for the Sodality and the Society. Hence their fervent lives and glorious death ought to be set before Sodalists from this standpoint also, and in sermons and in our publications, Sodalists might well be invited to petition the Holy See for the canonization of these heroic dead, and to pray for that intention.

The martyrs referred to were **Joseph Valencia Gallardo,** 27 years of age, Prefect of the Sodality in Leon (1) and an instructor in the Catholic Young Men's Association of Mexico (A. C. J. M.); **Salvator Vargas,** 20 years of age, Secretary of the same Sodality; **Ezechiel Gomez,** 17, and **Nicholas Navarro,** 20, members of the same Sodality.

Already in 1926, these young men had distinguished themselves among Catholics for the vigor with which they carried on a peaceful struggle against the tyranny of the Federal government. Gallardo had been the editor of a small periodical pamphlet like that entitled "*Desde mi sótano*" ("From my cellar") destined to encourage Catholics.

It was quite natural therefore that when about Jan. 1, 1927, *Rene Capistran Garza*, one-time national figure in the Catholic Young Men's Association of Mexico, issued an appeal to all Mexicans to join him in a struggle for religious liberty, these young men determined to join him. Realizing the tremendous odds against the new undertaking, they prepared themselves for the step with extraordinary fervor. **Nicholas Navarro** fasted the day before his departure; all received Holy Communion with great devotion.

Asked if he did not find it too much to leave his young wife and baby son, **Nicholas Navarro** is said to have replied:

" No! Before all I must defend the cause of God. And if I had ten sons, I would leave them all for love of my religion; when my son grows up, tell him his father died to defend his religion."

" We are ready to give our lives for the cause we defend," said another, *" because it is just and holy."*

And another: *" I wish to die, because I know the Lord wishes my blood to save my country."*

On the very day of their Holy Communion and departure to join the "*Liberators*" under Capistran Garza, these young men were betrayed into the power of the Federal army. **Navarro** was carrying papers at the time which would have made trouble for other Catholics; the Federals tried to snatch them but he tore them up and swallowed them before they could prevent him; for this he was severely beaten about the head with guns, and shot twice. While lying mortally wounded on the ground, he still had strength to call to his companions:

" Courage, boys! Remember the cause we defend! Viva Cristo Rey!"

After receiving two more dagger-wounds, he died.

(1) This Sodality was directed by *Father Philip Ares. S. J.*, now in Trinidad, Colorado, U. S. A.

Gallardo similarly encouraged his companions, until the soldiers fell upon him and tore out his tongue. *" Now talk,"* they yelled at him. Though his hands had been bound, be managed to pull them apart, and unable to pronounce a word, pointed to heaven instead, thus striving to give expression to *" Viva Cristo Rey."* He was shot at once and his head crushed by blows.

The bodies were later exposed in a public square so as to intimidate other Catholics, and this gave occasion to a number of very moving episodes. The father of one of the dead Sodalists commended himself and his family to the protection of his son. **Gallardo's** mother, an old lady over 70 years of age, far from being saddened, rejoiced in the thought that her son was a martyr and gave thanks to God for the favor of being the mother of such a son; out of reverence she would not touch his body except to kiss the feet. When she asked the authorities to give her the body, the favor was refused her (at least *then*); whereupon she answered: *" Well it makes no difference after all if you won't give me my boy's body; I offered his* **soul** *this morning to the Sacred Heart."*

When the bodies were finally taken to the morgue, a great multitude crowded to see them; cloths were soaked with their blood, and pieces of their clothes were cut away to serve as relics; many kissed their hands and feet. Their burial was like a triumph.

Note: In accord with the prohibitions of Pope Urban VIII, by using the term "*martyr*" and similar expressions, no pretense is made of anticipating the judgment of the Church.

MEN'S SODALITY FEDERATION OF CHILE.

Acts of the Central Council.

Directors of Sodality Federations and Federation Councils may find useful suggestions in the business transacted by the above-named Council in its session of March 20, 1927.

1) Memorial services were held for a deceased member of the Council.

2) A General Secretary was nominated.

3) New members of the Central Council were appointed.

4) Letters were prepared for all the federated Sodalities on the work to be accomplished by them.

5) Letters were read from:

a) The Cardinal Primate of Spain on a union of Spanish-speaking Sodalities.

b) Very Rev. Father General to the Central Council, the response being determined upon.

c) Father Visconti, S. J. of Sao Paolo, Brazil, regarding the federation of Sodalities in that republic.

d) Father Urrutia, S. J. of Bogota, Colombia, on a federation of young men's societies in that country.

6) Written information concerning the Uruguayan Sodality Federation was received by the Council.

7) The Council received a report from Argentinian Sodalists who had visited the Sodalities of the principal cities of Chile.

8) Certain rules were made touching Eucharistic celebrations.

9) Some pamphlets regarding Sodality affairs were considered by the Council.

10) There was a discussion about forming sections in the Sodality corresponding to the languages spoken by the Sodalists.

11) Visitations of the Sodalities in the Federation were settled on.

(" *Efemerides Marianas,*" 1927, p. 113).

Editor: *Lawrence E. O'Keeffe, S. J.*
Superiorum permissu.

Printed by the Tipografia Campitelli - Via Orazio Coclite - Roma